Date: March 17, 2015

Field Office: Boise District

Project name: Boise District Noxious Weed and Invasive Plant Management

Project description:

This proposal would provide District-wide analysis and guidance for noxious weed and invasive species treatments; with the ability to revegetate treated areas with desirable species for the next 5 to 10 years. This analysis will include a range of small noxious weed treatments and large invasive species treatments. The analysis will be site specific, so weed specialists can continue to treat small-scale noxious weeds infestations.

Large scale invasive treatments would require additional analysis. The required cultural and sensitive plant and animal surveys would be completed before treatments occur. If a Determination of NEPA Adequacy was not appropriate, an individual Environmental Assessment, as well as the required cultural and sensitive plant and animal surveys, would be completed before treatments could occur. Consultation for larger treatments would occur at Wings and Roots as they are developed (large and small are defined below).

BLM's Proposal:

- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Boise District Office (BDO) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for noxious weeds and invasive plants management within the Boise District boundaries. The purpose of the proposed action is to promote land health into the foreseeable future by reducing or eliminating infestations of noxious weeds and invasive plants on Boise District BLM lands within the Bruneau Field Office, Four Rivers Field Office, Owyhee Field Office and the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area in southwest Idaho

- The District already controls noxious weeds and invasive species using a range of methods including manual, mechanical, biological controls, and herbicides under the current 2007 EA. The District is proposing to expand and update its existing integrated noxious weed and invasive species management program, primarily by:
    - Increasing the number of noxious weeds and invasive species controlled;
    - Adding new chemical active ingredients for potential use; and
    - Adding new treatment methods, such as aerial herbicide applications.

  The proposed action consists of two planning levels: small-scale treatments (up to 50 acres in size) and large scale treatments (15,000 acres per treatment, up to 300,000 acres per year) using an Integrated Weed Management Program.
- Treatment methods would include:
    - Manual treatments using hand tools and hand-operated power tools to cut, clear, or prune herbaceous and woody species;
    - Mechanical methods using vehicles such as wheeled tractors, crawler-type tractors, or specially designed vehicles with attached implements designed to cut, plant, uproot, mulch, or chop existing vegetation on larger weed infestations where manual treatments would be impractical, too expensive, or where seedbed preparation is required for site preparation for re-vegetation;

- Prescribed fire for site preparation on a small scale to clear accumulated biomass thatch layer to improve herbicide efficacy and on a large scale for initial seedbed treatment to reduce annual vegetation cover and litter;
- Biological control involving the intentional use of insects, nematodes, mites, pathogens (agents such as bacteria or fungi that can cause diseases in plants), or domestic animals specific to particular weeds to weaken, consume, or destroy vegetation and which would not attack other plants;
- Herbicides, including aerial applications, to control and eliminate areas of noxious weeds and invasive plants and to contain existing infestations. The BDO is proposing to use 18 herbicides that have been approved for use on public lands under the 2007 Final Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement Record of Decision and 3 from the 2016 update.
- Revegetation to stabilize a site, restore desirable vegetation, and eliminate or reduce the conditions that favor noxious weeds and invasive plants following treatment via seeding or planting desirable perennial vegetation that will re-establish plant community structure and diversity.

Location: District-wide

Resource issues:

- Cultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Congressional Designations - Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Grazing
- Recreation
- Socioeconomics
- Soil
- Special Designations - Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)
- Vegetation including Sensitive Species
- Wild Horses
- Wildlife including Sensitive and TES
- Water Quality

Timeline: This project has a short timeline in order to meet the Fall 2016 treatment season.

- March 31-April 29-Public Scoping
- May-Chapters 1 and 2 Review
- July- EA Review
- August- Decision